



Sussex County 2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

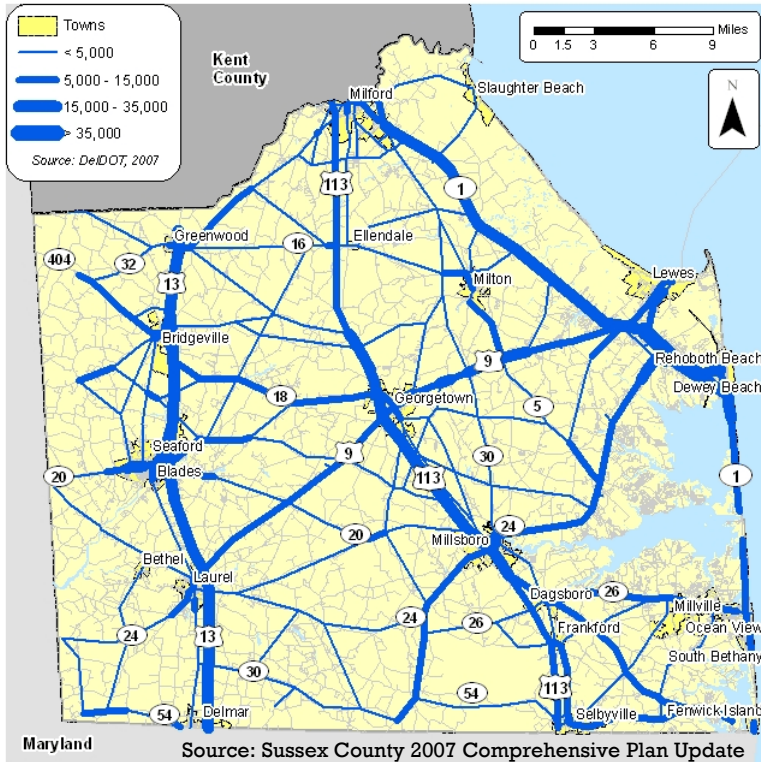


September 25, 2013

Sussex County

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Average Annual Daily Traffic - 2005

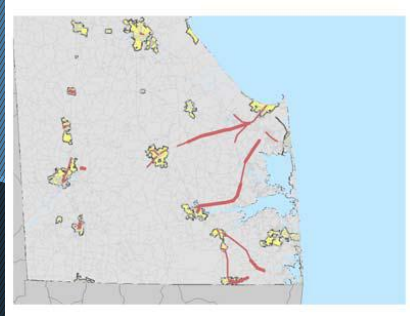


Sussex County is Delaware's largest county, with 938 square miles of land within its borders. Within that broad expanse is more than 37 percent of the State's 6,281 miles of public roadway.

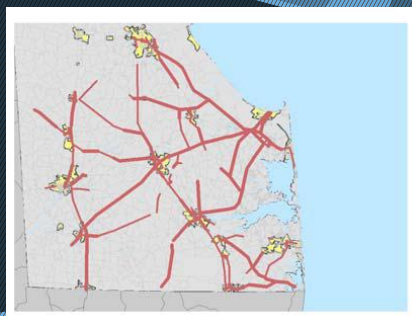
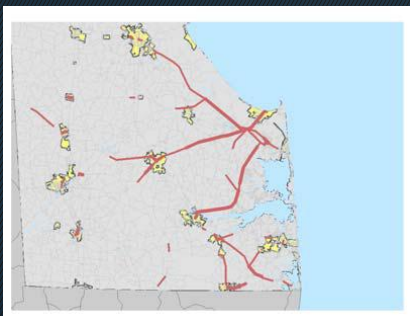
In Sussex County, the most heavily traveled roadways are US 13 and SR 1 (each carrying more than 30,000 vehicles daily), followed by US 113 with more than 24,000 vehicles daily. At the same time, the major east-west routes also are heavily traveled, though these are less capable of extensive traffic. Congestion due to the movement of summer visitors often compounds traffic problems.

As noted in the charts below, congestion is expected to worsen by 2030, even assuming currently planned projects are completed.

2000 and 2030 Year-Round Congestion (Volume to Capacity Ratio > 85%)



2000 and 2030 Summer Congestion (Volume to Capacity Ratio > 85%)



Source: Sussex County 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update

Sussex County Priorities

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request



The following items are Sussex County's transportation priorities for the 2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program, based on past requests and public input. Each priority is explained in further detail in subsequent sections of this request:

- SR 1 Improvements
- Sussex County Airport
- Park Avenue/US 9 Truck Route
- East-West Improvements
 - ❖ SR 24
 - ❖ SR 26
 - ❖ Routes 404/9
- Bicycling/Walking Trails
- North-South Highway Improvements
- Local Roads
- Intersections, Signage & Signalization
- Alternative Transportation

What the Public is Saying

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

In July 2013, Sussex County solicited comments and suggestions from the public on what transportation priorities residents, business owners, travelers, and other stakeholders see for the coming year.

Of the dozens of written responses received, citizens focused on a variety of needs and visions, from improved pedestrian/bicyclist safety (sidewalks, pathways, crosswalks, signage, etc.) to intersection redesigns and improved signal timing.

While the public's ideas are varied and many – reflected in the 'word cloud' representation below – one thing is clear: those traveling Sussex County's roads and highways expect a state-of-the-art transportation system that works, ensuring functionality, efficiency, and most of all safety for every user.



Del. Route 1 Improvements

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the SR 1 corridor in Sussex County's beach communities has gained increasing attention in recent years with numerous accidents, some fatal, occurring along the highway, particularly between the Five Points intersection and Dewey Beach.

That attention has intensified in recent months, with at least three fatalities this summer and a new legislative task force searching for answers and a report due in Jan. 2014.

Sussex County recognizes finding solutions to the challenges present along SR 1 will not be easy. A robust, \$14.4 million effort to install sidewalks and a dozen new crosswalks along the corridor in the coming years stands to improve pedestrian safety, but could serve as an impediment to the 80,000 daily beach-bound vehicles that depend on steady traffic flow to reach their destinations.

What is critical is that there be community consensus in whatever decisions are made, to ensure SR1 serves its primary purpose as the gateway to Delaware's beaches, while maintaining safety for those who walk, bike and ride the corridor each day.

Editorial »

Route 1 fatality demands response

Hot topics: Route 1 lights, crosswalks

DelDOT: Crosswalks will cost \$1.3 million

Police investigate fatal crash near Dewey

Courtesy: Cape Gazette (Summer 2013)

Del. Route 1 Improvements

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Sussex County supports a multi-faceted approach to enhancing SR 1 to improve pedestrian safety and ensure traffic flow.

➤ **Five Points Intersection/US 9 Realignment**

Improvements are needed at the Five Points intersection to reduce accidents at this gateway to the resort area, which is often congested and confusing to motorists. Realignment of the US 9 connection at Five Points, as well as a reduced speed limit on SR 1 south of the Nassau bridge, could help ease congestion and improve safety.



SR 1 at Nassau Bridge, Five Points

➤ **Intersection at SR 16 near Milton**

An overpass with exits at this intersection, similar to the design being built at SR 1/SR 30 near Milford, would improve safety by eliminating cross-traffic and the need for a traffic signal.



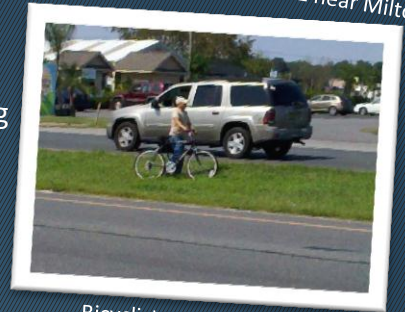
Intersection of SR 16 and SR 1 near Milton

➤ **Sidewalks**

Additional sidewalks along SR 1, particularly in gaps that exist between Five Points to Dewey Beach, would improve safety for pedestrians and encourage walking along the busy corridor.

➤ **Pedestrian Crosswalks**

Pedestrian/bicycle crosswalks at key locations – namely existing intersections – would improve safety, especially for those walking near the retail outlets.



Bicyclist crossing SR 1

➤ **Pedestrian/Bicycling Paths**

Expanding the popular Rails with Trails concept along railway corridors, particularly between Georgetown and Lewes, could improve alternative movement to and along the SR 1 corridor. Additionally, dedicated pathways, improved lighting, more visible signage and crossings, and education outreach efforts to visitors could enhance bicycling safety, which is paramount in light of recent tragedies involving motorists fatally striking pedestrians and cyclists on SR 1.

➤ **Commercial Properties Interconnectivity**

Connecting entrances/exits between adjoining commercial properties should be a priority, where possible, along the SR 1 corridor. This would allow those visiting stores the ability to move among the properties without having to re-enter and exit the highway. Such connectivity also should be used in commercial areas along the US 13 and US 113 corridors.



Sidewalk ends along SR 1

Sussex County Airport

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request



The Sussex County Airport near Georgetown is a critical link in Southern Delaware's transportation system, and the facility is equally vital to the local economy.

The airport records approximately 40,000 landings and takeoffs each year, and is home to a vibrant economic and educational base, including PATS Aircraft and its auxiliary fuel tank installation business and the DelTech airframe maintenance training program.

Currently, there are 16 employers and more than 900 jobs at the Sussex County Industrial Airpark, with an annual payroll of more than \$36 million. Planned improvements, notably the extension of the main runway from 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet, will help retain well-paying jobs and attract new opportunities to the Sussex County Airport and the greater community.

Sussex County government estimates expenditures of more than \$25 million from FY12 to FY16 for the Sussex County Airport & Industrial Park. The County estimates the local share of costs for the planned 1,000-foot runway extension to be approximately \$12 million. This includes \$6 million for the actual runway extension, and an additional \$6 million for the necessary realignment of Park Avenue (see Page 8).

Sussex County broke ground on the first 500-foot extension in August 2012, and expects that phase to be finished by late 2013. In August 2013, the FAA announced more than \$4.2 million in grant funding to complete this portion of the project. Meantime, the County is already planning for the second 500-foot extension.

The County urges the Council on Transportation, the Department, and the State to continue their work with the County and Delaware's Congressional delegation to secure the necessary federal and state funding for the full 1,000-foot runway extension, which is critical to ensuring aviation safety and continued economic opportunities in Sussex County.

Park Avenue/US 9 Truck Route

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request



As part of the planned main runway extension project at the Sussex County Airport, portions of Park Avenue – also known to travelers as the US 9 Truck Route – on the southeastern side of Georgetown would require relocation. Park Avenue is a local bypass for trucks, designated by the Department of Transportation, and is the sole route to the Sussex County Industrial Airpark. It also serves as a popular local route for motorists as they navigate through the Georgetown area.

As part of the road relocation project, the southern end of Park Avenue would shift from its current terminus at South Bedford Street to approximately one-half mile southward, to the intersection of South Bedford Street and Arrow Safety Road. The relocation is necessary to accommodate the County's goal of extending by 1,000 feet the main runway at the Sussex County Airport, as well as to provide a safer, more efficient route around Georgetown.

This project, estimated at approximately \$6 million, would present an opportunity for other long-needed improvements to be made to Park Avenue, including the addition of shoulders and installation of turn lanes, as well as intersection modifications at Arrow Safety Road and US 113.

County government requests the Council on Transportation give thoughtful consideration toward allocating additional long-term funding for Park Avenue's realignment and other improvements, all of which would enable the runway project to move forward and guarantee a safer route for the traveling public.

East–West Corridors

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

The Capital Transportation Program budget in FY14 includes approximately \$30 million in State and federal funding for a number of improvements to portions of the county's network of east-west arteries. Projects targeted for funding include continued engineering work on SR 24, intersection improvements along the US 9 corridor, and further engineering, right of way acquisition and eventual construction of the mainline SR 26 improvements.

Sussex County appreciates the State's ongoing attention to these very critical links to the transportation system by budgeting for these current and future long-term projects.

However, substantially more funding will be needed in the years ahead, particularly for rights of way acquisitions, so improvements on other major east-west arteries can occur across the entire network. These improvements would include:

- Widening corridors to accommodate increased traffic volume, improving traffic flow and safety;
- Resurfacing of shoulders to highway standards;
- Intersection upgrades such as the addition of left-turn lanes, increased illumination, and directional signage;
- Better coordination of traffic signals at identified choke points.

If current travel patterns continue as predicted, increased and frequent congestion will further interfere with local residents' mobility in many areas. Anticipating and funding necessary improvements such as these across the county's entire network of east-west arteries will better meet the travel needs of local residents and visitors for decades to come.

East–West Corridors

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

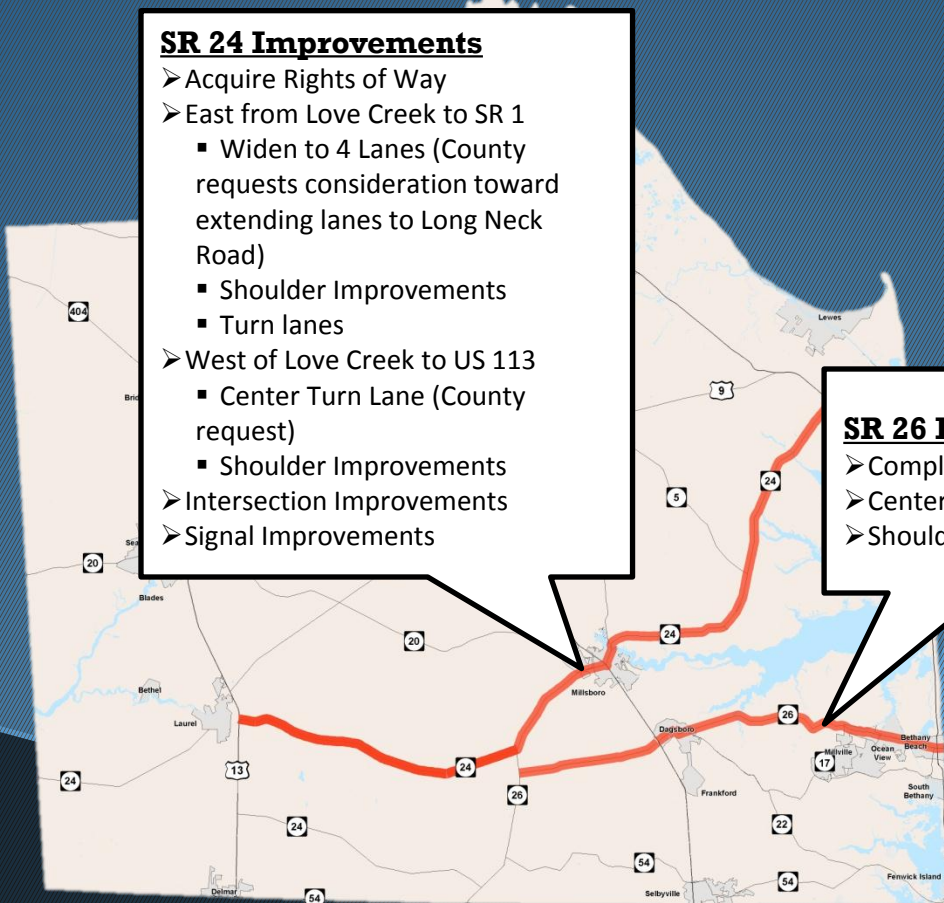
State Routes 24 and 26 are two of Sussex County's primary east-west corridors, allowing entry and egress from coastal communities. These routes are critical to allowing local motorists and destination drivers access to homes and commercial centers in the resort area. The routes in their current configuration, both two-lane roads, are currently insufficient to safely and efficiently move traffic into and out of the area, particularly during peak summer months and evacuations.

SR 24 Improvements

- Acquire Rights of Way
- East from Love Creek to SR 1
 - Widen to 4 Lanes (County requests consideration toward extending lanes to Long Neck Road)
 - Shoulder Improvements
 - Turn lanes
- West of Love Creek to US 113
 - Center Turn Lane (County request)
 - Shoulder Improvements
- Intersection Improvements
- Signal Improvements

SR 26 Improvements

- Complete Rights of Way
- Center Turn Lane
- Shoulders



East–West Corridors

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

The SR 404/18 corridor, which connects with US 9 at Georgetown, is the principal means of east-west movement in Sussex County. This route, which connects to Route 404 in Maryland, is the gateway for beach-bound traffic during summer months. High traffic volume often limits this two-lane road's capacity; Maryland is widening its portion of the route to accommodate east-west traffic to and from Delaware.

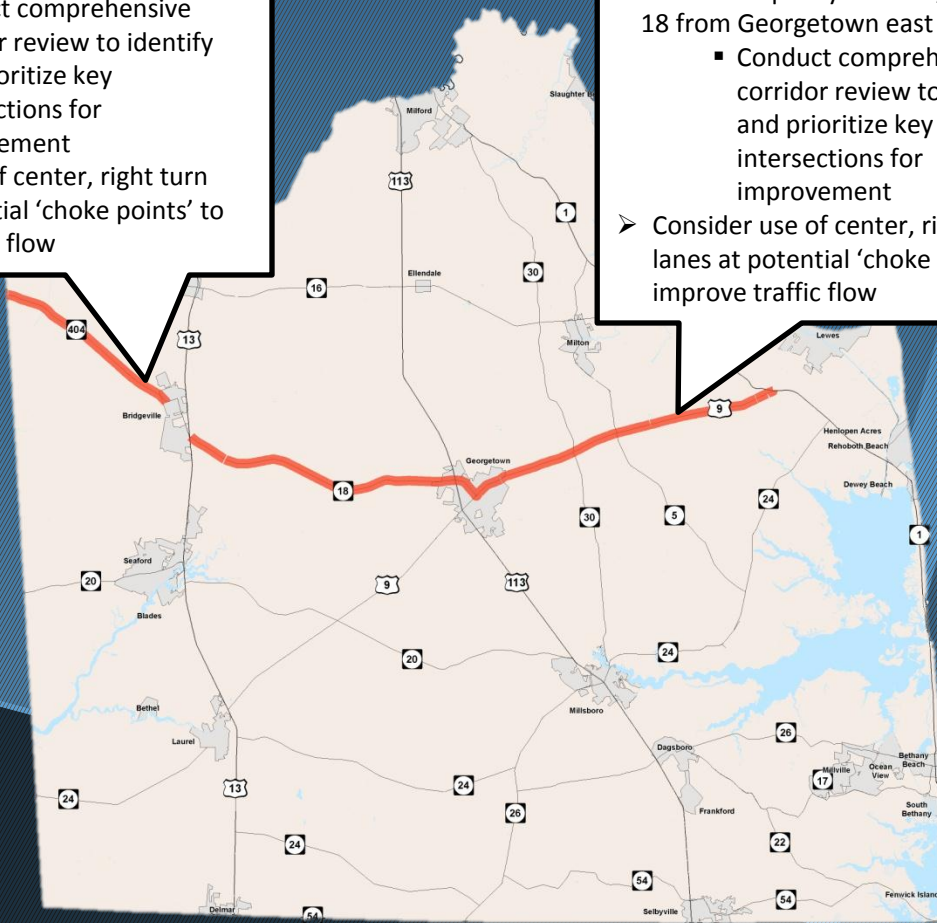
SR 404/SR 18 Improvements

- Increase Capacity for SR 404/SR 18 from Maryland east to Georgetown
 - Conduct comprehensive corridor review to identify and prioritize key intersections for improvement
- Consider use of center, right turn lanes at potential 'choke points' to improve traffic flow

US 9/SR 404/SR 18

Improvements

- Increase Capacity for US 9/SR 404/SR 18 from Georgetown east to SR 1
 - Conduct comprehensive corridor review to identify and prioritize key intersections for improvement
- Consider use of center, right turn lanes at potential 'choke points' to improve traffic flow



Bicycling/Walking Trails

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

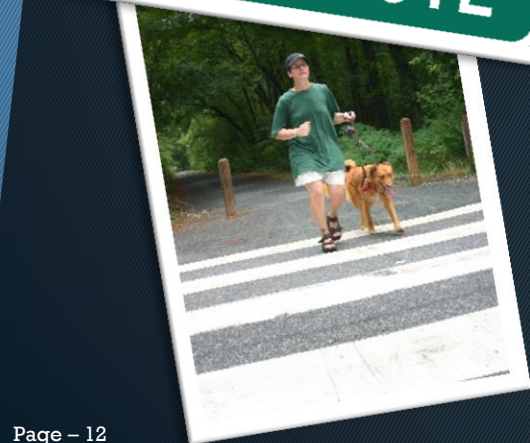
Sussex County supports the continued attention placed on efforts to bring new Rails with Trails pathways to Southern Delaware.

In the 2014 State budget, the Delaware General Assembly set aside an additional \$4.5 million in funding toward the trails initiative that will link communities, parks, and other points of interest in the First State. One potential project that could benefit from this funding is the long proposed Georgetown-to-Lewes Rail Trail, which would stretch 17 miles alongside the Delaware Coastline Railroad line from the county seat to the beaches.

This proposed multi-use path would provide an alternate means for residents and visitors alike to navigate Sussex County, to access other trails, such as the Breakwater & Junction Trail between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach, and would promote a healthier lifestyle for users young and old. It could also retain the current rail line, providing a critical link for businesses to move products and keep the local economy strong.

Sussex County requests that the Council on Transportation and the Department evaluate proposals such as the Georgetown-to-Lewes Rail Trail when deciding how to allocate Delaware's annual share of federal matching funds, such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Program (STP) grants.

Those dollars, in conjunction with the \$25 million that has been allocated by the State in the past three years, could make alternative, multi-use paths a reality for bicyclists and pedestrians who want to connect with their communities and the natural beauty that makes Sussex County so special.



North-South Hwy Improvements

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request



Improvements to Sussex County's major north-south corridors, specifically US 113, remain a significant transportation need in order to address local traffic requirements, seasonal demands and interstate travel. Public sentiment to preserve the existing highway with minimal impacts on properties remains high, and the State should weigh those concerns heavily as it resumes corridor plans.

US 113 is fed by SR 1 from the north, SR 404 from the west and the Maryland portion of US 113 from the south. Many travelers to the coastal areas of Sussex County already utilize US 113 to bypass the often congested SR 1 corridor. This is especially evident along the corridor at points including Georgetown and Millsboro during summer weekends, as traffic can back up for miles at times.

Users have distinct, and in some cases, conflicting operational requirements. Local users prefer access to properties with relatively simple and safe traffic patterns. Trucks, vacationers, and long-distance commuters, on the other hand, desire high-speed traffic patterns with minimal interruptions. Intersection upgrades, additional travel lanes, and other modifications could satisfy travelers' needs, and ease demand on other north-south arteries, such as US 13 and SR 1.

Because of the project's potential costs and effects, the County believes improvements should be phased in, based on public consensus, and given high priority to move the project from concept to reality.



Local Roads

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Routes such as SR 1, US 113 and US 13 serve as the major arteries of Sussex County's transportation network. Local roads, however, are the vessels that move traffic throughout all parts of the body.

The Sussex County Council submits the following list of local roads as those that should be targeted for upgrade and expansion. These roads are currently or soon will serve a growing population, which will result in added traffic. Many of these roads, either by State designation or through motorists' preference, are used as alternate routes for major thoroughfares.

Upgrades of these roadways includes paving of the surface, widening shoulders and/or installing turn lanes, as indicated. Upgrades also should include marking bicycle and pedestrian lanes, and illuminating key intersections.

The County recognizes it may be impractical to abandon the use of 'tar and chip' treatments on some roads. The County, however, encourages DelDOT to continue pursuit of its 10-year goal to pave all 'tar and chip' roads with an annual average daily traffic (ADT) count greater than 500 vehicles.



Double Bridges Rd.



'Tar & Chip' roadway west of Georgetown

Local Roads

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Bethany Beach

- RD 360 – Fred Hudson Road
(Flooding)
- RD 363 – Double Bridges Road
(Shoulders)

Blades

- RD 490 – River Road
(Shoulders)

Bridgeville

- RD 40 – Redden Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 525 – Coverdale Road
(Shoulders)

Dagsboro/Frankford

- RD 336 – Piney Neck Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 402A – Fox Run Road
(Pave)
- US 113 – DuPont Blvd. at Crickett Street
(Median crossover for EMS)

Fenwick Island

- DE 1 – Coastal Highway
(Sidewalks)

Georgetown/Harberson

- RD 48 – Zoar Road/Hollyville Road
(Shoulders; Intersections at Avalon and Hurdle Ditch roads)
- RD 62 – East Trap Pond Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 318 – Park Avenue (Truck Route 9)
(Shoulders; Left-turn lane from US 9)
- RD 527 – Wilson Hill Road
(Pave)
- US 9/SR 5 – Lewes-Georgetown Highway
(Intersection signal timing)
- US 113 – DuPont Blvd. at E. Trap Pond Road
(Median crossover for EMS)
- US 113 – DuPont Blvd. at Speedway Road
(Intersection)



Greenwood

- DE 36 – Scotts Store Road
(Widen shoulders)
- RD 594 – Webb Farm Road
(Flooding at sharp turn)

Laurel

- RD 446 – Beaver Dam Branch Road
(Pave & Widen)
- RD 492 – Portsville Road/Sixth Street
(Pave; Sidewalks)
- RD 515 – Bacons Road
(Pave; Shoulders)

Lewes

- RD 88 – Cave Neck Road
(Lengthen left-turn lane from SR 1)
- RD 266 – New Road
(Shoulders; Bike path)
- RD 268A – Dartmouth Drive
(Service exit)
- RD 270 – Wolfe Neck Road/Munchy Branch Road
(Bike/pedestrian path)
- US 9 – Lewes-Georgetown Highway
(Lengthen left-turn lane from US 9 at RD 258B intersection)

Local Roads

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Lewes (cont.)

- RD 275 – Plantations Road/Postal Lane
(Intersection signalization)
- RD 283 – Cedar Grove Road/Plantations Road
(Shoulders)

Millsboro

- RD 288A– Dorman Road
(Pave)
- RD 328A – Godwin School Road
(Pave)

Millville/Ocean View

- RD 84 – Central Avenue
(Shoulders)
- RD 349 – Old Mill Road
(Pave; Shoulders)
- RD 350 – Railway Road
(Widen shoulders)

Milton

- RD 38 – Prime Hook Road
(Flooding; Pave & Widen)
- RD 88 – Cave Neck Road
(Widen shoulders)

Rehoboth Beach

- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext.
(Shoulders/sidewalks/bike path)
- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext.
(Drawbridge plates for bicycles)
- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext. at Church Street
(Intersection signal timing)

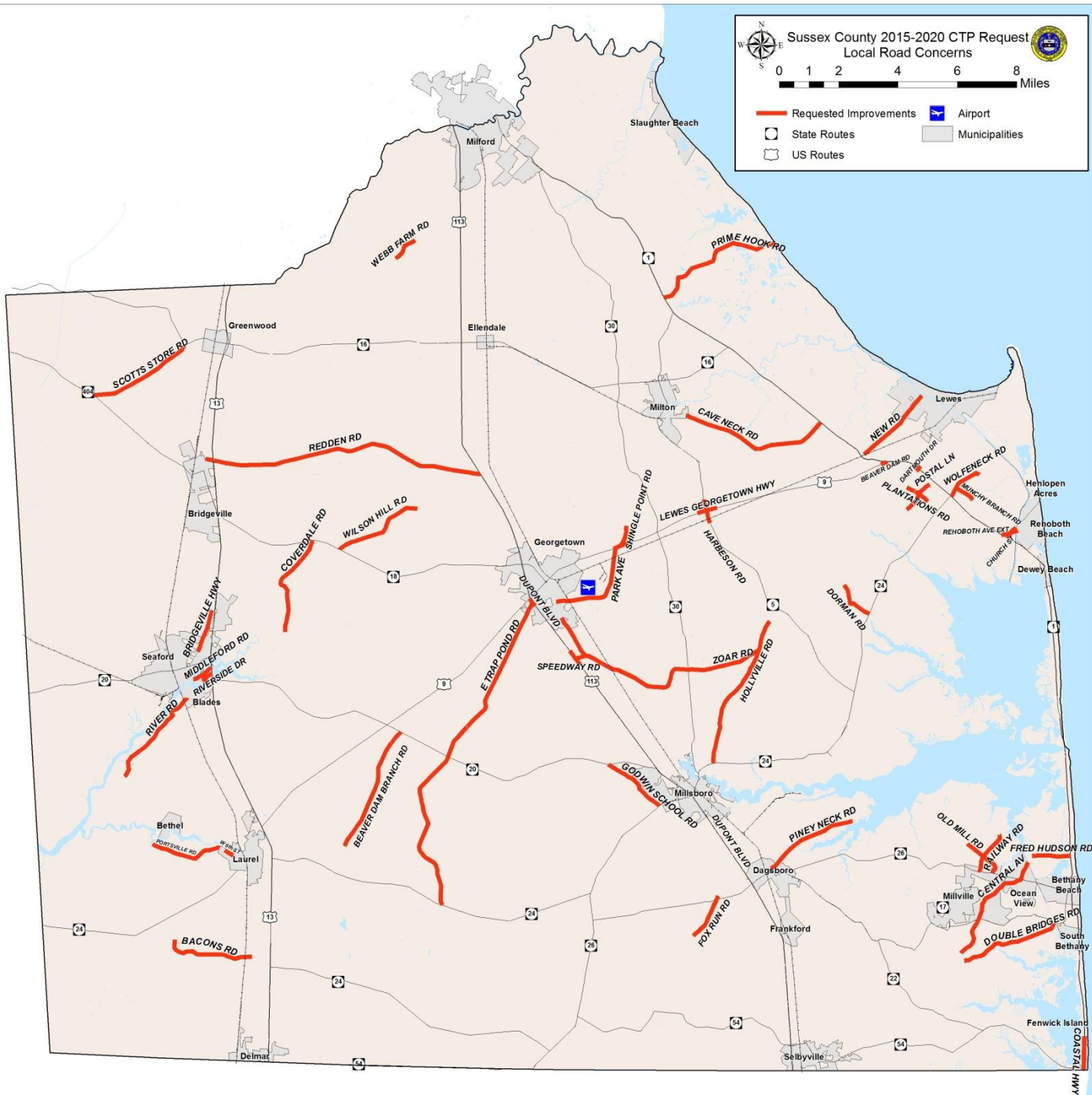
Seaford

- Riverside Drive
(Pave; drainage)
- RD 535 – Middleford Road
(Gateway improvements)
- US 13A – Bridgeville Highway
(Sidewalk connectivity)



2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Items highlighted in **RED** correspond with road improvement requests listed on Pages 15 and 16 of the Sussex County 2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program request.



Intersections, Signage & Signalization

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Like a chain, a transportation network is only as strong as the intersections, signage and traffic signals that connect together the system of roads and highways. Routes that easily clog because of limited capacity, poorly timed signals and inadequate signage can impede the flow of traffic.



The County encourages the State to continue evaluating intersections along major routes, such as the US 9 corridor between Georgetown and Lewes, to determine the best means for improving traffic flow. The County supports the State's current effort to improve US 9 intersections at Gravel Hill, Harbeson, Hudson and Sweetbriar roads. Improvements at these and other intersections could include the installation of dedicated turn lanes and better coordination of traffic signals.

The County also encourages the State to improve signage along and near roads, such as SR 30 and SR 5 from Milford to Long Neck, that could serve as local bypass routes, thereby alleviating congestion on major highway corridors, including SR 1 and US 113.

An additional suggestion to improving mobility is to incorporate blinking red arrow, left-turn signals at key intersections. This type of signal, found in areas of Kent and New Castle counties, could ease congestion at Sussex intersections, such as those along SR 1, US 9, US 13 and US 113.



Transportation Alternatives

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

As high energy costs and economic uncertainty continue to weigh on household budgets, Delaware has the opportunity now to expand its transportation alternatives – particularly mass transit – to meet public demand, conserve resources and lessen the burden on highways. Stronger consideration toward various options, such as those listed below, could reduce traffic congestion on Sussex County's network of roads.

➤ **Bus Service**

▪ *Fixed Route Service*

Extending DART First State service to other areas, such as Selbyville, Millsboro, Long Neck and other job centers; expanding year-round service to multiple Sussex County points from Dover/Wilmington

▪ *Private Partnerships*

Encourage private mass transit providers to offer bus routes between urban centers and Sussex beaches

▪ *Signage and Stops*

Current bus stops should be evaluated to ensure pick-up and drop-off locations are optimal and not placed at out-of-the-way sites; larger signs at those locations could better draw public attention and boost ridership

▪ *Coordinated ParaTransit Services*

Helps the growing senior and disabled population with more efficient service

➤ **Passenger Rail Service**

The County supports the effort by Delaware and Maryland to study passenger rail service on the Delmarva Peninsula

➤ **Expanded Park & Ride System**

Offer public additional park & ride locations to encourage carpooling, improve use of mass transit

➤ **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

Complement the popular Junction and Breakwater Trail with other rail trails (e.g. Georgetown to Lewes, as well as Ellendale to Milton); such interconnectivity of trails could allow cyclists to commute safely between coastal and inland portions of the county



Closing Remarks

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

Sussex County Council thanks the Department of Transportation and the Council on Transportation for considering its request for the 2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program.

As limited transportation funding is appropriated for various projects throughout the State of Delaware, particularly in these difficult economic times, the County Council trusts that DelDOT and the Council on Transportation recognize how vital the County's recommendations are to accommodating an increasing population, expansive geography and rebounding local economy.

Sussex County encompasses the largest geographic area in Delaware, occupying more than 46 percent of the area in the state. Additionally, nearly 37 percent of all State-maintained roads are in Sussex.

The Delaware Population Consortium estimates Sussex County's population will grow approximately 30 percent between 2010 and 2025. Despite a weaker national economy, tourism continues to thrive in Southern Delaware, and that causes additional demands on our transportation system.

Residents of Sussex County continue to express concerns regarding the maintenance and improvements needed to the local road system. As the county grows, these concerns will only increase. Waiting to plan and make needed roadway improvements after the fact will only make these improvements more expensive and difficult to implement.

Sussex County requests the State of Delaware weigh these factors as it allocates transportation funds. The State should also consider the economic impact as it relates to the County's request.

Closing Remarks

2015-2020 Capital Transportation Program Request

As noted in previous years, County Council encourages the State to consider adequate funding for needed improvements to the County's transportation system. Sussex County urges DelDOT to take the necessary steps now to make essential projects, namely improvements along SR 1 to ensure pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as well as improvements to the network of east-west arteries, among its highest priorities.

In addition to improving mobility and safety, enhancing economic development opportunities in Sussex County should be a factor in determining transportation priorities and funding.

Rerouting Park Avenue and extending the main runway at the Sussex County Airport may preserve existing jobs at the County's Industrial Park, and spawn new employment opportunities in the near future. Meantime, providing a walking/bicycling trail between Georgetown and Lewes would increase tourism opportunities, especially in central Sussex County.

Overall improvements to the County's transportation system will ensure Sussex County and the State of Delaware can continue to serve our population, as well as attract and safely accommodate the millions of visitors who come to our state each year.

Again, Sussex County Council thanks the Department of Transportation and the Council on Transportation for allowing the County the opportunity to submit its yearly requests for the Capital Transportation Program. We expect this report will assist the Department in prioritizing which projects earn priority funding from DelDOT's limited resources.



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